

Meeting Summary

LA-VENTURA FUNDING AREA

PROPOSAL REVIEW MEETING WITH DWR

December 20, 2016 - 12:00 p.m.

Location: City of Santa Clarita

In-Person Attendees:

Grace Kast	Greater Los Angeles IRWM Region
Jolene Guerrero	Greater Los Angeles IRWM Region
Rick Viergutz	Upper Santa Clara RWMG
Heather Merenda	Upper Santa Clara RWMG
Lynn Rodriguez	Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County
Zoë Carlson	Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County
Matt Frary	LA County Flood Control
Boykin Witherspoon	California State University
Peter Massey	Tree People
Cindy Montanez	Tree People
Wendy Ramallo	Council for Watershed Health
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health
Evon Willhoff	Department of Water Resources
Keith Wallace	Department of Water Resources
Linda Palmquist	MNS Engineers

Attendees on the phone:

Virginia Maloles-Fowler	LA County Flood Control
Erica Sasman	LA County Flood Control
Leighanne Kirk	West Basin MWD
Meredith McCarthy	Heal the Bay
Julianna Delgado	California State University
Wendy La	Laser Consulting

Overview of LA-Funding Area DACI Grant – Decision-making and management roles:

The LA-Ventura Funding Area has developed a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Involvement Program Task Force comprised of 2 members from each of the three regions (Greater Los Angeles, Upper Santa Clara, and Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County).

Each of the three regions has also developed a DAC committee.

The LA-Ventura Funding Area has designated the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) as the Lead Agency for the grant. LACFCD has selected two on-call consultant teams led by Tree People and California State University that will perform work for the grant.

Representatives from each of the consultant teams were invited to participate and were in the room.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, Grace Kast, DACIP Task Force co-chair, welcomed everyone and shared that the purpose of the meeting was to get concurrence from DWR that the Task Force, on behalf of the Funding Area, was on the right track with the approach to the proposal and seek any comments on the key components (activities list and background) of the preliminary document. The meeting was also an opportunity to ask questions of DWR regarding some aspects of the grant program.

2. Discuss Process and Progress To-Date: DACIP Task Force Members – Grace Kast

The Task Force provided an update to DWR staff regarding the progress that has been made in the Funding Area in preparing the draft proposal for the DACI grant. The first step in putting the proposal together was to conduct outreach in each of the IRWM Regions and for the Task Force to determine the approach for the proposal.

3. Review Draft Proposal Sections – Background, Activities/budget Sections

a. Lynn Rodriguez – Background

Lynn guided the review of the Background Section and asked if the 5,000 character limit was firm. The Funding Area is very large and there's a lot of information to include in order to address the things called for in the RFP. DWR said within reason we can go beyond that limit – if the information is important and relevant to the proposal. Regarding underrepresented communities, DWR will defer to us to identify these communities (which might include homeless and migrant populations) and also how and where to target local DAC areas for the grant. The important thing is that we don't leave out any areas that may have unidentified needs. DWR will provide more detailed comments when they have had more time to review the draft.

b. Grace Kast – Activities/Budget

Grace guided the review of the Activities section, emphasizing that the Task Force had recently directed the consultants to revise the proposal to be less detailed and indicate that an update to the tasks/budget will be completed at the conclusion of the needs assessment. DWR concurred with the approach and the level of detail were sufficient for the time being, and with the proposed allocation of funding and

estimated timetable. DWR will provide more detailed comments when they have had more time to review the draft.

4. Questions for DWR – Rick Viergutz

Rick reviewed the list of questions with DWR. The questions are listed below.

Highlights from DWR's responses can be found at the end of the list of questions.

- a) *Will we need to amend the grant agreement each time we want to move funds from one activity to another with a project (category) and/or between projects (categories)? If so, will it be a "formal" amendment that requires long lead time? Is there a \$ threshold, either individually or cumulatively that triggers "formal" amendments?*
- b) *The advancement process requires advancements be requested within a certain time frame, and the money from advances be spent within a certain time frame. With the \$1 million limitation for each advance request, we hope to receive advances up to 10 "projects" and have a few questions:*
 - 1) *Is it possible to have more time to apply for some or all of those advances beyond 90 days after execution of the grant agreement as described in the statute? Because we don't yet know what information will come from initial phase of outreach and needs assessments, we hope we might also have more time to develop and refine our proposed activities based on the initial phase of outreach and needs assessments. We appreciate that DWR will extend the deadline for spending the advances from 6 months to 18 months.*
 - 2) *If we must apply for all 10 advances within the same 90 day period, can we request that the advances be released on a staggered schedule?*
 - 3) *If we have to submit all 10 advancement requests within 90 days, can we make modifications to the scope of work for each advance payment after receipt, and would that require a formal amendment?*
- c) *As we develop and refine our outreach to DAC and underrepresented communities we'd like clarification on whether or not we need to prioritize our DAC areas for outreach, and do you have suggested criteria for this prioritization?*
- d) *Does DWR expect our needs assessments to use a standardized approach across the Funding Area? Each region is different and an identical needs assessment process/question list may not be appropriate. It might be that some questions are shared across the regions, and then some regions may add their own separate questions too. Do we need to combine the results of the needs assessments for the three IRWM regions into a single report/summary or can they be presented separately?*
- e) *How should we address and define underrepresented communities?*

Highlights from DWR responses to questions:

- DWR concurred that the homeless population is an underrepresented group that may fall outside the DAC boundaries, which have a strict legal definition. The DAC outreach plan can include homeless area and projects for the homeless should be eligible to apply for DAC implementation grants.
- DWR allows for reimbursement of proposal preparation costs.
- Administration costs can exceed 5%, but the task force was encouraged to keep the costs as low as possible – definitely below 10%.
- DWR does not expect/recommend using the DAC IP funds for Project Construction. They intended the focus of this grant to be outreach and assessment.
- DWR explained that they prefer to avoid amendments and hope to keep the task descriptions somewhat vague to allow flexibility. He also explained that there are different types of the amendments. The easiest are the “Level one” amendments that can be implemented to transfer money from one task to another if the amount is less than 10%. Level one amendments do not require a legal review on DWR’s end.
- DWR explained that initial invoices are usually rejected because it’s so difficult to package an invoice perfectly at first. After that, DWR pays within 45-60 days.
- Additional discussion is needed on the process for advancing and receiving payments and a meeting is being set up for February, for further discussion.
- DWR recognized that the different regions may need tailor the assessment to address their DAC communities. They are not expecting a uniform outreach and assessment approach.
- The solicitation for the next round of general IRWM funding and for DAC grant funding will be at the same time.

5. Next steps and proposal submittal schedule

- The DACIP Task Force will complete their own review of the preliminary draft, building upon comments region by region, ending with GLAC’s comments by 1/5/17.
- The DACIP Task Force will have the consultants make revisions based on the DWR meeting (making it more explicit that funds not expected to be left over for construction, minor tweaks to timetable wording, insertion of further activity detail – especially to tie together those doing the work to their particular activities) and other Task Force review comments.

- The DACIP Task Force to distribute draft to Area and all stakeholders, and subsequently make additional revisions if necessary. A draft sample grant agreement for the DACIP is available online. Each agency can begin circulating for Counsel review.
- DWR will give overview of processes (i.e. invoicing) and financial details in late January or early February. DACIP Task Force plans to make this meeting mandatory for all parties planning to do work under the DACI grant.
- DACIP Task Force will submit complete revised draft to DWR in late January and, pending DWR comments and subsequent revisions, a final draft in mid-February. This is still over one month in advance of DWR's current proposal submission deadline.
- DWR's own internal processes include posting a final draft online with a recommendation document allowing additional public comment (final duration TBD).
- Once the final proposal is solidified (targeting mid-February), DWR anticipates executing the agreement within one month (since it doesn't need to go to their Director and the public review period is expected to be 30 days max). As a result, work could potentially begin in late March.

Overall Meeting Highlights

- No controversy or surprises arose during the meeting.
- DWR affirmed that the Area DACIP Task Force is on the right track, on (even ahead of) schedule, and appear to be working together cooperatively, effectively, and transparently.
- DWR acknowledged the extension of the proposal deadline is in line with the Task Force's approach to get the proposal done right rather than just quickly. Since the DACIP is a new program, they too are learning a lot through this proposal development process.
- DWR concurred that the homeless population is an example of an underrepresented group that may fall outside the mapped DAC boundaries, which have a strict legal definition. The DAC outreach plan should indeed include homeless areas and any other Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) or underrepresented areas deemed appropriate.
- Projects in EDAs or underrepresented areas but outside the currently mapped DAC areas will be eligible for implementation funds (through usual IRWM process), but it is still to be officially determined whether they will count towards the 10% required to go to DACs. Similar to the RFPs use of "DAC" to be broad/inclusive, the intent is to be inclusive in determining/applying the 10%.
- DWR re-iterated that they will allow for reimbursement of proposal preparation costs. This can be requested via letter or incorporated into the proposal.
- Administration costs can exceed 5%, but should be kept as low as possible – definitely below 10%.
- DWR confirmed moving funds between activities would require an amendment. They prefer to avoid amendments and hope to keep the task descriptions somewhat vague to allow flexibility. There are different types of the

amendments. The easiest are the “Level one” amendments that can be implemented to transfer money from one task to another if the amount is less than 10%. Level one amendments do not require a legal review on DWR’s end.

- The deadline to request advances will be a hard 90 days from execution of agreement, though spending within first 18 months may have some flexibility if justified and agreed upon before the agreement is executed. Additional discussion is needed on the process for advancing and receiving payments and a separate meeting will be set up for further discussion, including the impacts should the regions be expected to front funds.
- DWR recognized that the different regions may need tailor the assessment to address their DAC communities. They are not expecting a uniform outreach and assessment approach, but do prefer a single compile report.
- The solicitation for the next round of general IRWM funding and for DAC grant funding will be at the same time, though it has not yet been determined whether any of the DAC project funds will be available in the first round. The reason for this is DWR would like to make sure there are adequate DAC project funds available in Round 2 to allow for completion of the DACI grant process which will be wrapping up in 2020.
- The \$9.8M for outreach is a minimum amount. If deemed necessary, the Task Force could submit proposal for more money and the excess would simply deduct from what remains for implementation.
- A draft grant agreement for the DACI Program is available online. Each agency can begin circulating for Counsel review.
- DWR does not expect/recommend using the DAC IP funds for Project Construction. They intended the focus of this grant to be outreach, assessment, and project development (e.g., planning, design, environmental documentation, etc.). It is DWR’s intent for DACI funds to be used for outreach and project development, but project construction may be permitted if the Funding Area can demonstrate that all other DAC needs have been evaluated.
- DWR explained that the timing on invoice payment depends on how complete the invoices are when submitted. Typically, the initial invoices are sent back for revision because it’s so difficult to package an invoice perfectly at first. After that, if invoices meet the requirements, DWR pays within 45-60 days.
- As mentioned above additional discussion and training for staff and consultants is needed regarding the process for requesting advances, preparing invoices and receiving payments, A mandatory meeting with DWR, participating staff, and all consultants that will or may receive funding from the grant will be set up for February.

